THE BOURBON NEWS.

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SPRING.

At last, O joy, sweet spring is here,
Though keen and cold is still the wind,
And all the earth lies bleak and drear,
And icy bonds the streams still bind.

The scent of buds and coming flowers
Is in the air, and fills my heart,
And soon the woods and leafy bowers
Will in new life and beauty start.

From yonder hedge, first of his clan,
A bird begins his song to sing,
As though he would do all he can
To welcome back the sweet new spring.

That spring is here scarce need be told,
And soon the trees will all be green,
And nature, robed in green and gold,
Stand out in all her glorious sheen.

For from the sere leaves at my feet
A modest violet lifts its head,
And with a fragrance passing sweet
It warns me heed well where I tread.

And here, too, at my feet, I see
A daffodil with golden bell,
As though about to ring with glee
The gladsome news it comes to tell.

And earth, so long in slumber deep,
Stirs dreamily, as if to wake
From its protracted, frozen sleep,
And from its icy bondage break.

And soon the newly wakened power
Will in each bush and tree be stirred,
And throb in every charming flower,
And in the song note of each bird.

So lessons sweet and full of grace
Life's darkest hours will surely bring:
Some flower of hope will show its face,
Some bird of promise sweetly sing.

—William G. Haeselbarth, in Christian Work.

IN AN EVIL MOMENT.

BY EMMA C. HEWITT.

The editor sat in his sanctum, a heavy frown upon his brow, his blue pencil in hand, rapidly scoring here and there with a muttered curse, first for the stupidity of typos, anon for the stuff sent in by would-be contributors, whose position and influence made conciliation necessary. His annoyance was increased by the irritating consciousness that a messenger boy was waiting at his elbow, and had been so waiting in stolid silence for some time. Three short, sharp whistles at the tube directly behind him!

"See what's wanted!" commanded the magnate, never lifting his eyes and giving a specially heavy blue line to an obnoxious word. But the command met with no response. The silent figure at his side never moved. "Why don't you answer the tube, you idiot?" he exclaimed, furiously, as the three whistles came again, short, sharp, impatient. Then his pencil dropped from his fingers and rolled unheeded to the floor. Beside him, mute and motionless, stood one of Raphael's cherubs! No wings had he, to be sure, and more clothes, but one of Raphael's cherubs all the same. The same cherub's face—the same golden aureole! The baby-blue eyes looked into his with a mixture of sadness and pleading which moved the stern heart strangely.

Again the whistle sounded. Without a word he answered it himself, creating wonderment below, not to say consternation, by the announcement that he was busy, adding with a vigor of language well known in those realms, that anyone who disturbed him within the next 15 minutes might draw his salary to date and get out! Winston "busy" and the presses waiting for him! Fifteen minutes' valuable time lost! The foreman passed the word along with a shrug—the typos swore, but it made not a whit of difference. The autocrat had sent forth his fiat, and if fire had been discovered issuing from the sanctum, it is to be doubted that anyone would have had the temerity to knock on the door before the allotted time had expired.

"Now, how did you get up here, and what do you want?" he demanded more gently of the little creature beside him. "Don't you know that editors are very busy men, and not to be disturbed in this way?"

In accounting to himself afterwards for his extraordinary attitude upon this occasion, his only excuse for not pitching the child out summarily was the remembrance of a tiny grave upon a New England hillside where slept a little brother of 30 years before.

"I came up myself. Nobody saw me," answered the child, in a plaintive voice that had something unchildlike in its ring. "Please, do you buy poetry?" and he brought from behind him a baby-like hand in which was closely clasped a sheet of note paper.

If he had announced himself as a dealer in diamonds, Winston could not have been more taken aback.

"Why? Are you a poet?" he asked, a mixture of astonishment and amusement on his countenance.

"No, but Sister Marie writes poetry, and she's sick, and there's only two of us, and she's sick, you know—I told you that—and I thought maybe—maybe—I could get some money—"

"Let me see what you have there," replied Winston, abruptly.

The idea of the sick girl lying at home there, and this scrap of a child out trying to sell her poetry seemed to him a monstrous thing. No doubt it was the worst kind of rubbish! It was folly to even look at it. But the whole strangeness of the situation had a sort of fascination for him. The child grew red and white by turns as he gazed at the countenance of the man who held his fate in his hands.

"Boy, your sister is a genius!" exclaimed the great man, as he rapidly scanned the lines.

"I don't know just what that is," answered the charub, modestly, "but I feel sure it must be something very nice, or you wouldn't look so—so—"

What a funny, old-fashioned little body it was, to be sure.

"This shall go in at once," went on the magnate, "and I will see what I can do further. We don't pay much for poetry ordinarily, but this is worth it. Give your sister this from me and tell her to come and see me on Saturday at three."

"Oh, thank you, sir," and the baby's eyes dropped modestly as he tightly clutched the piece of gold put into his palm. And then he heaved a deep-drawn sigh of relief, joy—what? and turned and left the room. Only when the child was entirely out of sight did Winston realize that he had neglected to obtain the name and address of the new genius he had discovered. He turned the poem to the light, but with no success. Upon the back of the double sheet, however, was a sketchy head drawn faintly in pencil. The lines were bad and the drawing crude in every way, but the sketch was evidently intended for the cherub who had just visited him. In one corner was the artist's name, "Marie Wendall." Jotting it down in his note book and passing his hand over his forehead and eyes, as though to erase all outside impressions, the great editor was no longer a man; he was once more a machine. With relief the waiting pressmen and typos heard his whistle below and they knew that whatever "fit had took him," as the "devil" expressed it, the autocrat was ready for work once more. But they looked at each other aghast when the message came over the tube:

"Take out that article on the coal regions I sent down half an hour ago and set this poetry instead."

Surely, "the old man had gone off his head."

"That form's locked up and just going to press," the foreman ventured to remonstrate.

"Blast the form! Do as I say!" came from above.

"But it'll take—" Came again from the depths.

"Do it if it takes all night! Who owns this paper, anyway?" roared Winston, and shut the tube with a snap to denote that as far as he was concerned, the interview was over.

Something had disturbed him more than usual. Perhaps it was the memory of the little mound on the hillside—perhaps it was something indefinite—an impression too vague to be classified. Whatever it was, in half an hour, Winston declared himself through, methodically tucked his blue pencil into its accustomed slot, locked his desk, betook himself to his club for dinner.

When he read over the poetry in the great daily the next morning, there was a something which arrested his attention. A scene, a memory came to his mind, but it was too elusive for him to spend any time in trying to catch it. So he dismissed it from his thoughts. A distinct shock received an hour or two later recalled it all, and too forcibly.

This shock came in the shape of a note from a fellow-editor:

"What are you giving us, anyway?" wrote he. "You must have been short of copy indeed, to try to palm off on your readers that old poem of Tennyson's as new matter! 'Marie Wendall,' too. Of all the colossal nerve! I think it might be called the 'Great American.'"

Tennyson's! No wonder there had been a familiar ring to the lines! Why had he skimmed over them so hastily? Why had he thrown caution to the winds? Why, oh, why had he made such an ass of himself that all who ran might read? He turned sick and white at the thought of all it meant—this fearful blunder! If he only could hope that the casual reader would not discover it.

Any such hope as this was dashed ruthlessly to the ground during the next few hours. Letters there were from all directions—jeering they were, angry, remonstrant, everything but sympathetic. The world likes to be humbugged, but it does not want the fraud to be a palpable one like this. And the readers of the great daily did not hesitate to say so in most uncompromising terms.

Wild with anger and mortification, and with imprecations deep if not loud, the great editor set himself to find the woman who had served him such a trick.

"It is only another evidence of the utter deceit of the whole sex," he said to himself bitterly. "The trail of the serpent is over them all!"

Without any address or other clew to her whereabouts, to find the unknown was no easy task. The simplest solution of the difficulty would seem to be to wait until Saturday at three o'clock, but he knew very well that she would not put in an appearance. She was too sharp for that. She had the money, and that was all she wanted.

With a grim smile that boded no good to that young woman, he started out to find the author of his woes. And by subtle but legitimate means, means that no other man would have thought of, John Winston tracked her at last.

"This is Miss Wendall?" inquired he, with most elaborate courtesy of the little lady in black who answered his summons.

She bowed her head with a surprised expression that would ask his mission.

"You write poetry, I believe?" he questioned again, with sarcastic deference.

She gently shook her head and murmured a negative, with deeper wonder on her face, to which was added a shade of fear. She thought her visitor must be a lunatic.

"I am Mr. John Winston, editor of the Daily Astonisher," said Mr. Winston, impressively, playing his trump card and expecting to see his listener convicted through her own confusion.

Instead of being crushed, she only said:

'Yes?" and bowed politely, waiting with interest to know what might follow this important piece of information. Other than this, there was not the quiver of an eyelash that shaded the blue eyes raised to his, eyes so like those of the cherub that the relationship was unmistakable.

"You have never written any poetry?"

"No. Why do you ask?"

"You have received no message from me?" he asked again, waiving her question.

"No! Message from you? Why should you send me a message?"

"Tell me—have you been sick?"

She drew herself up haughtily. This was too much.

"I cannot see," she said, "that it is of the slightest consequence to you, sir, in any way; but I have not been sick. And now, sir, if you are not a lunatic, you are a most impertinent man, and if you do not leave this house at once, I will call an officer to remove you."

He! John Winston! threatened by this mite of womanhood with being put out by an officer! The idea was so absurd that he laughed aloud, thus furnishing his listener with most convincing proof of his insanity. She went to the pull to ring the bell, but Winston grew grave again in a moment.

"Miss Wendall—please!" he exclaimed. "Let me tell you all about this. I am neither insane nor impertinent, but very much perplexed. Listen to me for three minutes. It is all I ask."

When he reached the conclusion, she looked up with quivering lips and tear-dimmed eyes.

"Oh, sir! it is that dreadful boy! I think he will kill me. This is the worst thing he has done yet!"

"He may have done this innocently," suggested Winston, kindly. "A boy with a—"

"No, I know what you would say: 'A boy with a face like that couldn't do such a thing wickedly.' But he could, he can! That boy is capable of anything! He has a face like a cherub, but he acts like a demon. Why, one day I came home and found him a few streets off, dressed like a beggar, his face covered with dirt and with an old tin cup in his hand, collecting pennies from passers-by for his sick sister! I'm sure I don't know what he does with his money, but I know that I will not let him have any more than allowance which I think is enough for a boy of his age. When I refuse, he manages in some way to obtain it. But this is the very worst. He didn't do it innocently, for he read aloud to me while I copied those lines."

"You see," she went on, a moment later, "we were only half-brother and sister. His mother was—we were not altogether happy after pa died."

"Poor child! I should imagine not," said Winston, to himself, "if the son's charming characteristics are a direct inheritance from the mother."

"But I promised my step-mother I would look after Harold. I can't help thinking he needs a man's hand over him," and she finished with a sigh.

"I should say so," answered John Winston, grimly, and as though he would like to be that man who should have the shaping of that young gentleman's future career. An inspiration came.

"Miss Wendall," said he, earnestly, "I feel sorry for you, and the charge which is laid upon shoulders too young to bear it. I may be able to serve you in one way. Say nothing to this degenerate young man, but bring him to the downtown office next Saturday afternoon—he will not suspect me of being there—and I will give him such a talking to as will cause that golden aureole of his to shrivel up to a crisp. We will see what can be done with him."

"Oh, sir, I'm sure I'm grateful to you!"

"Not at all, not at all!" replied Winston, gruffly, but with a twinkle in his eye. "I'm bound to have my revenge out of somebody, and he seems to me the most appropriate one."

Just what passed between the cherub and the great editor no one ever knew but the cherub, the cherub's sister and the great editor himself, but the young gentleman came out of the interview a wiser if a sadder boy.

And the editor married Miss Wendall? Oh, no, he didn't—at least, not yet.—Ladies' World.

DEBT OF THE WORLD.

The Obligations of Many Nations Increase Steadily.

Whether it be a good or a bad thing for the nations, there is no room to doubt that the debts of the world are growing steadily. In 1875 it was computed that they stood at £4,750,000,000, as compared with a round £4,200,000,000 two years earlier. On the basis of figures, many of which have been obtained by us at first hand, and are likely on that account to be more accurate than some of the wild guesses to which certain irresponsible statisticians have treated us, we ourselves estimate that the indebtedness of the world to-day stands at £5,800,000,000.

As probably every one knows France has the doubtful distinction of being the country which has the largest debt. The latest figures put the total at something like £1,200,000,000, which is nearly double the debt—£660,000,000—of Great Britain, which ranks as second on the list. Russia follows, with a total of £575,000,000, and insignificant Italy comes fourth with £506,000,000—that is, if we count as separate items the joint debts of Austria-Hungary and the individual debts of the two portions of the nation. The joint debt stood in 1895 at £275,990,000; while the debt of Austria alone was £122,678,600, and that of Hungary alone £207,729,000, or £606,397,600 in all. The United States debt amounts to £339,000,000, and that of Spain—exclusive of the more recent loans in the prosecution of the war in Cuba—at £279,000,000. — Philadelphia Press.

A Divisionist.

"And you have the assurance to tell me that you discharged your laundress because of her belief in divided skirts? A new woman like you?"

"You didn't let me finish. I was going to explain that she had an idea that it was the proper thing to divide my supply of skirts between herself and her 18-year-old daughter."

"Oh!"—Indianapolis Journal.

HUMOROUS.

—Nothing makes some women feel so important as to undergo treatment for a disease with a long name.—Atchison Globe.

—"He—"I love you better than my life." She—"Considering the life you lead, I cannot say that I am surprised."—Indianapolis Journal.

—By two o'clock every day people have made so many blunders that they long for to-morrow that they may start all over again.—Atchison Globe.

—"Young man," said the minister, solemnly, "why do you postpone your reformation?" "Oh, it's never too late to mend," replied the youth.—N. Y. World.

—Mother—"How is it that you get so many bad marks at school?" Little Johnny—"Well, the teacher has got to mark somebody, or else folks will think she is not attending to her business."—Tit-Bits.

—Wouldn't Stand Alone.—"They tell me Van Wither is very weak since his last sickness." "He is. I saw him on the street just now and asked him for a fiver; but he couldn't stand a loan."—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

—Englishman (in British museum)—"This book, sir, was once owned by Cicero." American Tourist—"Pshaw! That's nothing. Why, in one of our American museums we have the lead pencil that Noah used to check off the animals as they came out of the ark."—Tit-Bits.

—Inopportune.—Proprietor of Tonsorial Pariors—"See here, when that Mr. Norox comes here again to get shaved, before you commence on him just mention to him that we have gone over to the cash system." Subordinate Artist—"Oh, Lord! I did the last time he was here and his face got so long that I didn't get through by closing time."—Truth.

THE CZAR'S FRIGHT.

Caused by Precautions Taken for His Personal Safety.

While Nicholas II. was traveling recently from St. Petersburg to one of the imperial residences called Czar's village he observed in his salon carriage an electric button which he had never before noticed. "What is it for?" he asked his aid-de-camp.

"If your majesty will be pleased to press the button the train will come to an instantaneous standstill. It is a danger signal."

"I should like to see it work," said Nicholas, musingly, and following his inclination placed his index finger hard upon the knob. The train stopped and a dozen officials rushed into the carriage with pale faces and trembling hand and foot. A danger signal from an imperial carriage salon excites no end of ugly reminiscences in Russia—or any other country, for that matter.

The czar left his carriage and walked out into the morning air.

"Let's proceed along the track for half an hour or so," said his majesty to the aid-de-camp. "The train can wait."

Arm in arm they marched, while the much-craved-for feeling of safety took hold of Nicholas' head and heart. Suddenly turning on his heel the emperor proceeded sideways toward the field. There was at a distance of a few hundred feet a peasant's hut which he desired to inspect. Walking briskly toward the hovel, Nicholas overheard a shout of "Halt!" uttered by somebody lying in ambush. "Halt! or I will shoot!"

Nicholas stood still as if suddenly stricken with palsy, while the aid placed himself in front of his trembling master.

"It is only the guard drawn up along the railway tracks as far as the imperial train travels," he said by way of explanation. "Knowing your majesty's aversion to military display, the troops were ordered to lie down on the ground when the imperial train hove in sight."

The czar easily regained his composure. "These boys have turned out to protect me," he said. "They shall remember this day."

Then he called the officers before the front and gave each one some trinket as a keepsake, denuding his breast of decorations and his pockets of jewelry, cigar cutter, knife, card case and other trinkets.—N. Y. Journal.

Growth of Cities.

The fact that the big European cities have been growing much faster than those of the United States is pointed out by Dr. Albert Shaw in his recent book on municipal government in Europe. In 1870 New York had 150,000 more people than Berlin; in 1880 Berlin had outstripped New York, and it still maintains its lead. In 1875 Hamburg had 348,000 people and Boston 342,000; in 1890 Hamburg had 569,260 and Boston 448,000. Baltimore was once as big as Hamburg, but it has long been distanced. Leipzig has grown from 127,000 in 1875 to 350,000 in 1890, and has distanced San Francisco. Breslau used to be smaller than Cincinnati; it has now distanced it. Cleveland and Buffalo and Pitsburgh were all in 1880 bigger than Cologne, but Cologne was much the bigger in 1890. Dresden is growing more quickly than New Orleans. Hanover, though a sleepy place, is growing as quickly as Louisville or Jersey City.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

An Unfeeling Judge.

"You are charged with carrying concealed weapons."

"It is all a mistake, your honor. You see, I had a pair of old pistols that I shoved into my pocket to illustrate a very clever pun I recently worked up. I get the boys to talking about balloons, and then I say my life was once saved by parachutes. When they give me the laugh I draw out the old pistols—pair-o'-shoots, see! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Did you invent that?"

"Yes, your honor."

"Thirty days."—Cleveland Leader.

A Decided Misfortune.

Smith—I suppose Jones was vexed when his wife left him.

Brown—I guess he was; why, he had just given her $100 the day before.—Up-to-Date.